

# INSPECTION REPORT

**WARDEN HILL INFANT SCHOOL**

LUTON

LEA area: Luton

Unique reference number: 109570

Headteacher: Mrs G. Mastrogiavanni

Reporting inspector: Mrs Jane Wotherspoon  
22199

Dates of inspection: 26 - 29 November 2001

Inspection number: 193792

Full inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school:              | Infant School                           |
| School category:             | Community                               |
| Age range of pupils:         | 4 to 7 years                            |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed                                   |
| School address:              | Birdsfoot Lane<br>Luton<br>Bedfordshire |
| Postcode:                    | LU3 2DN                                 |
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| Appropriate authority:       | The governing body                      |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mrs B Smith                             |
| Date of previous inspection: | April 1997                              |

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members |                      |                             | Subject responsibilities  | Aspect responsibilities   |
|--------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---|---|
| 22199        | Mrs Jane Wotherspoon | <i>Registered inspector</i> | Science;<br>Design and technology;<br>English as an additional language.                                      | What sort of school is it?<br>The school's results and pupils' achievements;<br>How well are pupils taught?<br>How well is the school led and managed?<br>What should the school do to improve further? |
| 9388         | Mr Anthony Mundy     | <i>Lay inspector</i>        |   | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development;<br>How well does the school care for its pupils?<br>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?                                      |
| 12116        | Mrs Christina Morgan | <i>Team inspector</i>       | Mathematics;<br>Art and design;<br>Religious education;<br>Special educational needs;<br>Equal opportunities. | How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?  |
| 26292        | Mrs Helen Mundy      | <i>Team inspector</i>       | Foundation Stage;<br>Information and communication technology;<br>Music;<br>Physical education.               | Financial planning and management.  |
| 23658        | Dr Stephen Parker    | <i>Team inspector</i>       | English;<br>Geography;<br>History.  | Provision for pupils' personal development;<br>Assessment.  |

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Pupils' backgrounds reflect a range of social and economic circumstances, which are broadly average overall. One hundred and seventy-eight boys and girls attend the school full-time and 63 attend on a part-time basis in the nursery. There were no reception pupils at the time of the inspection because the school admits pupils full-time in the term after their fifth birthday. A Reception Class will start in January and another will begin in April. Some pupils start school in Year 1 having had no reception experience. However, the local education authority (LEA) is consulting the school about possible changes to these admission procedures. When pupils start school full-time their attainment is broadly average for their ages. Twenty per cent of the pupils come from a range of ethnic groups and half of these pupils speak English as an additional language. A part-time teacher is funded through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant to support groups of these pupils for two mornings per week. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is below average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need. The proportion of pupils who have free school meals is below average. The school has a stable staff with several long serving members.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is an effective school with many good features. There is a strong ethos that balances pupils' academic achievement with their personal development. Standards are above average in many subjects; they are good in the core skills of literacy and numeracy by the time pupils are seven. Considering pupils' broadly average starting point this reflects good achievement. Teachers have high expectations that pupils will work hard. The school's leadership and management are good; governors and staff work together well. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science because these subjects are taught well.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are strengths.
- A strong ethos of care fosters very good relationships between all pupils.
- The school places significant emphasis on pupils' personal and social development.
- The headteacher gives a strong personal lead to the school's work.
- There is a good focus throughout the school on art and designing skills.

### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

- The standards pupils achieve in physical education (PE) and religious education (RE).
- The quality of teaching in some classes and in RE and PE throughout the school.
- The marking of pupils' work to guide the activities that follow.
- The organisation and use of time throughout the school day.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was last inspected in 1997 it was judged to be an orderly and caring community, but with many areas that needed improvement. Since then the school has made a good level of improvement in most aspects of its work. Standards have improved in many subjects and are now above average in English, mathematics and science, but they are below expectations in RE and PE. The quality of teaching the essential skills of literacy and numeracy and in several other subjects has improved, but there are weaknesses in teaching in PE and RE, and among individual teachers. Provision for pupils' personal development is much stronger than previously and better planning of the curriculum means that pupils' knowledge and skills are developed in a systematic way.

## STANDARDS

The table below shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

| Performance in: | compared with |      |      |                 |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
|                 | all schools   |      |      | similar schools |
|                 | 1999          | 2000 | 2001 | 2001            |
| Reading         | C             | B    | C    | C               |
| Writing         | A             | A    | B    | B               |
| Mathematics     | B             | C    | B    | B               |

| Key                       |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <i>well above average</i> | A |
| <i>above average</i>      | B |
| <i>average</i>            | C |
| <i>below average</i>      | D |
| <i>well below average</i> | E |

The school's results are generally above average, though there are some slight variations between the attainments of groups of pupils from year to year. Boys attain standards that are better than those attained by boys nationally. The gap between boys and girls that is found nationally is not so marked in this school. In 2001, a higher than usual number of pupils in Year 2 had special educational needs and this accounts for the slight dip in school performance. The school's targets for 2002 are challenging but achievable and results are likely to be better than 2001. Inspection evidence confirms this. Pupils are achieving well and standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. They are also above national expectations in art and design, and design and technology but not high enough in PE and RE. Pupils' presentation of work is good. Their well-developed speaking, writing, and drawing skills help them to communicate what they know in a range of other subjects.

Pupils enter nursery with average skills for their age. They achieve soundly and begin full-time school with broadly average attainment for their age, although their drawing skills are particularly good because they are taught to observe closely. About a third of pupils in Year 1 enter full-time school without any experiences in a Reception Class. They do well to catch up, and many attain the standards expected of an average seven year old by the end of Year 2.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect                                 | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school                | Pupils have very good attitudes to their schoolwork, which can be seen in their eagerness to take part in activities. They are enthusiastic, confident and hardworking.   |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Pupils behave well in lessons. Around the school, in the playground, during lunchtimes, and in the dining hall, behaviour is very good and shows a good level of self-discipline. Pupils are polite and friendly. |
| Personal development and relationships | Relationships are very good and pupils show a high level of respect to each other. The school is a well-integrated community. Pupils willingly accept small tasks and carry these out responsibly.                |
| Attendance                             | Good. Attendance figures are higher than the national average and there is a very small amount of unauthorised absence. Most pupils arrive punctually.  |

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Nursery      | Years 1–2 |
|------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Quality of teaching    | Satisfactory | Good      |

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is always satisfactory in the nursery and sometimes good. There is particularly effective teaching of observational skills and so the children's drawing and painting skills are good. Good attention to personal, social and emotional development help pupils to develop positive attitudes and enthusiasm for school. In Years 1 and 2, teaching varies between subjects and teachers. It is good in English, mathematics and science, and as a result pupils achieve well in these subjects. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. Regular use of information and communication technology (ICT) has helped to raise standards. There are weaknesses in one class in Year 2 and in the teaching of PE that reflect teachers' lack of confidence and subject knowledge. In RE, the lack of time restricts the effectiveness of teaching. The way the day is split up means that little pockets of time at the end of lessons are not always used effectively. Lesson plans are detailed and evaluated well, but individual teachers do not always interpret the joint planning in the same way. Teachers have improved the way they adapt activities to meet the different learning needs of groups of pupils. Behaviour management is good and teachers have high expectations that pupils will work hard. Relationships are strong and there is a calm atmosphere in most classes, which helps pupils to concentrate and learn well. Work is marked regularly but does not put enough emphasis on what pupils need to do next to improve.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect  | Comment  |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum   | Good. There are particular strengths in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. There are good links between subjects that make activities relevant and exciting. A good range of visits and visitors to the school adds interest to pupils' learning. There is too little time for RE and the subject content is not explored well enough; this does not comply fully with requirements. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs   | Good provision overall helps these pupils make good progress. There is very good focused support in small groups but more variable support in classes.   |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language                                 | Good. There is a clear system for supporting those pupils at the early stages of speaking English and they make rapid progress.  |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Very good overall. Provision for moral and social development is particularly strong. It is underpinned by the school's emphasis on a structured teaching programme in personal, social and health education and the innovative work being developed in citizenship. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is good.   |
| How well the school cares for its pupils  | Very good support and care on a daily basis helps pupils to feel secure. Assessment procedures are good overall. The information is used well to set targets for pupils to improve in English, mathematics and science. There is little formal assessment in other subjects.   |

The school enjoys a good partnership with parents. Most parents think highly of the school and are fully involved in supporting their child's education both at school and at home.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect   | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Good. The very good lead from the headteacher has helped to improve the school. She is supported well by senior staff who have specific responsibilities. There is a good sense of teamwork among staff and a strong commitment to the pupils. In most subjects, the role of the co-ordinator in monitoring and supporting developments has improved greatly. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities             | Good. Governors fulfil their duties well and are fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are well informed and bring a range of expertise to their roles. They acknowledge that there is further scope for developing their monitoring role.   |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                       | Good. The school makes a detailed analysis of the pupils' performance and compares it with national figures to identify what needs improving. Action is planned and taken in a systematic way to address areas for development and to set targets for improvement.  |
| The strategic use of resources                                   | Good. The budget is planned carefully to match closely the areas that require improvement. The school seeks to achieve value for money when planning its spending. Specific grants are used appropriately to support the learning of identified pupils.   |

There is an adequate number of teaching and other staff to support pupils' learning. Some support staff are new to their role and currently receive training in how best to help the pupils. They are not always well deployed at times when the whole class is taught together. The accommodation is spacious and the quality of learning resources is good overall.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most  | What some parents would like to see improved  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children are happy at school.</li> <li>• They are comfortable to approach the school with their concerns.</li> <li>• The school expects pupils to work hard and they are making good progress.</li> <li>• The school is led and managed well.</li> <li>• The school helps pupils to develop into mature and responsible people.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of extra activities offered.</li> <li>• The information about their child's progress.</li> <li>• The working relationships with the school.</li> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> <li>• The admission of some pupils straight from nursery into full-time school.</li> </ul> |

The inspection team agrees with parents about many of their positive views but does not endorse all their concerns. In common with many other infant schools, there are no after school activities but there is a good range of interesting visits to extend pupils' experience. The amount of homework is sufficient to meet government recommendations and the school's policy. The school gives parents a good amount of information and tries hard to keep open channels of communication with parents. Admission procedures are in line with local authority guidance and the school does what it can to help pupils make up for lack of reception provision.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Most children start nursery in the term after their fourth birthday. Some have had pre-school experience. Their skills are broadly as expected for their age and they achieve satisfactorily. Most children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in all areas by the time they start Year 1.
2. Children are keen to come to nursery and settle quickly to the routines. They concentrate well and are confident. They learn to develop good attitudes to school that have a positive impact on their learning as they get older. Pupils behave very well and develop good relationships with others. A good emphasis on speaking and listening helps pupils to develop a wide vocabulary, but the teaching of reading and writing is underdeveloped. As a result, the older and more able children do not gain as much as they could in these aspects of communication, language and literacy. Mathematical development is well integrated into all activities and pupils achieve soundly. Strengths in the teaching of knowledge and understanding of the world encourage the children to ask and answer questions about what they see. This natural curiosity follows them through the school and supports their learning in science. The children's skills in drawing and painting are good because their observational skills are highly developed. Knowledge and understanding in other areas of learning are similar to those expected for the age of the children.
3. The results of Year 2 tests in 2001 were average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics, when compared both with all schools nationally and with similar schools. A higher than average proportion of pupils attained standards that were above expectations in writing. Teachers assessed science standards as average. These results were lower than those of the previous year in reading, writing and science but this is accounted for by the fact that a higher than usual proportion of pupils had special educational needs. However, the results in mathematics in 2001 were the best the school has ever achieved and explained by the extra support that pupils were given and the success of the setting arrangements.
4. A notable feature of the school's results over time is the good attainment of boys. While girls' attainment is similar to, or slightly above, the national figures, boys tend to do much better than boys nationally. The gap that exists between boys and girls nationally is not so marked in this school and, in some years, boys have attained more highly than the girls. The school monitors the patterns of attainment of different groups of pupils very closely, and makes comparisons from year to year, with other local schools and with national figures. Analysis of results shows that pupils from ethnic minority groups, including those who speak English as an additional language, attain standards on a par with their peers. It also shows that most of the pupils who have received no reception education do well to attain standards in tests that are similar to those expected. However, figures show that these younger pupils are less likely to exceed the national expectations.
5. Standards seen during inspection were better than the picture presented by the 2001 results, mainly because there are fewer pupils with special educational needs in the current group of Year 2. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average and pupils make good progress from their average starting point to achieve these levels. There are encouraging signs that the improvement in mathematics can be sustained and that other results will rise again. The school has set challenging, but achievable, targets for these pupils.

6. In English, pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to others. Standards in speaking are often high and pupils are confident to give extended answers to questions. Reading skills develop well and, by Year 2, most pupils read aloud expressively. Achievement is good because of the emphasis that the school places on reading and the support that many pupils receive at home. Higher attaining pupils achieve a very good level of independence in reading and confidently tackle demanding texts. Frequent practise in writing for a range reasons and in different styles develops pupils' confidence and skill. Teachers use writing frames well to teach pupils how writing is structured. Most can write at the level expected for their age, and higher attaining pupils use their well-developed vocabulary to add interest to their writing. Spelling is good as a result of the structured approach to teaching spelling patterns. Standards of handwriting and presentation are good.

7. Pupils make good progress in mathematics to attain above average standards. During inspection, most pupils were already working within the levels expected, and a good proportion demonstrates the potential to exceed expectations. Their knowledge and understanding of number develops well through regular practise of counting skills, and many develop good strategies for solving mental number problems. They record their work in a variety of ways and learn to apply their knowledge to a range of structured and open-ended tasks.

8. The good focus on scientific investigations is very effective in developing good skills and knowledge in all areas of science. Pupils use scientific enquiry to good effect. They learn how to plan and carry out experiments, and to predict what might happen. They are particularly good at observing and recording clearly what they have done and what they understand. Their good writing and drawing skills help in this respect. Higher attaining pupils are increasingly able to use correct scientific vocabulary.

9. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards attaining the targets in their individual education plans (IEPs). They receive very good quality support from a part-time teacher, who has a clear focus on meeting pupils' specific literacy and numeracy targets. The support in lessons from non-teaching staff is more variable in quality depending on their expertise but is at least satisfactory. Pupils from ethnic minority groups, including those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress. The clear speech and good focus on subject specific vocabulary by teachers is instrumental in helping these pupils to make good progress in subjects across the curriculum. Once pupils have improved their basic English skills they begin to achieve as well as their peers, and many of these pupils are in the higher attaining groups within classes.

10. Pupils achieve well in art and design and in design and technology, where the systematic development of pupils' skills is underpinned by a broad and well-structured curriculum. Teachers capitalise on pupils' good observational and drawing skills that develop from their time in the nursery. Their good literacy skills are used to best effect to help pupils attain standards that are above expectations in history and geography. Pupils do not achieve well enough in RE and PE, and standards are below expectations in these two subjects. There are weaknesses in teaching PE which stem from teachers' lack of confidence and subject knowledge. There is not enough focus on RE because the time available for extending pupils' knowledge is too limited and this has a negative impact on pupils' achievement over time. Pupils attain standards in all other subjects that are similar to expectations and they achieve soundly.

## **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

11. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning, and they understand the importance of a calm and orderly working environment. The response of pupils during the inspection was rarely unsatisfactory, and was often good or very good. Ninety eight per cent of the parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire confirmed that their children like school. The inspection evidence, including many conversations with pupils, endorses the parents' view. Attitudes have improved since the last inspection.

12. Children in the nursery learn positive attitudes by observing the good relationships between parents, teachers and support staff. They enjoy meeting adults and other children, and are confident and secure in classroom and school routines.

13. Pupils come to school enthusiastically. They enjoy lessons in all subjects of the curriculum and, when given opportunities, work independently without needing close supervision. They listen attentively to their teachers and to each other, and are keen to answer questions and participate in discussions. Excellent attitudes were seen in a Year 1 English lesson, where pupils were involved in a wide variety of activities, including reading aloud to the class. In this complex lesson, pupils of all attainments concentrated intensively for extended periods, and made excellent progress. Pupils' attitudes were satisfactory or good in several lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory. In these lessons, they listened patiently when the pace was slow, or when required to complete repetitious work. Attitudes were unsatisfactory in only one lesson, a PE lesson on the playground, where teaching was unsatisfactory.

14. Pupils work very well in pairs and in groups, readily exchanging ideas and sharing materials. Pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, have very good attitudes. In discussion with visitors, they are friendly and polite, and proud of their achievements. During formal lessons, they rarely drift away from their table places, or leave work unfinished.

15. Behaviour in classrooms is good, and pupils' focus upon learning contributes to their good progress. In lessons where the pace is slow, or the content not stimulating, behaviour is not consistently good but very rarely unsatisfactory. Brief, positive rules for behaviour are displayed in most classrooms. Pupils cheerfully conform to the rules and respond very well to teachers' skills in class management. Behaviour is very good in the open areas of the school building, and in the playground, and is excellent at lunchtimes in the dining hall. Discussions with parents and pupils during the inspection confirm that incidents of serious misbehaviour, or aggression between pupils, are rare, and are dealt with effectively when they do occur. No pupil has ever been excluded from Warden Hill Infant School.

16. Pupils' personal development is very good overall. They are thoughtful and mutually respectful, and they willingly carry out everyday duties in classrooms and throughout the school. Pupils in Year 2 have additional responsibilities as receptionists in the school office, and as helpers in the library. During the inspection, in a very good 'business meeting' in the hall, the headteacher led pupils in a discussion about possible changes to the activities available during rainy lunchtimes. Pupils spoke confidently to the whole school and expressed some mature ideas.

17. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils respond politely and confidently to each other and to adults. They are not afraid to be seen to make mistakes, and they are mutually supportive. Each member of the school community has equal status and receives sensitive and effective support at work and play.

18. Attendance is good when compared to other infant schools, and is above the national average for primary schools. The number of unauthorised absences is significantly below the national average. Regular and punctual attendance has a positive effect upon pupils' attainment and progress. Registration periods are efficient, and lessons begin promptly.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

19. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection when there were a number of weaknesses in key areas. Teaching is consistently sound in the nursery with some good features. In Years 1 and 2 it varies considerably between subjects and between teachers. Although teaching was good or better in over half of lessons seen during inspection, there were examples of unsatisfactory teaching in one class in Year 2 and in PE across the school. Weaknesses relate mainly to teachers' subject knowledge and confidence.

20. Teaching in the nursery is always satisfactory, and is sometimes good. The nursery teacher has good knowledge of the Early Learning Goals, and the development of young children. Other nursery staff have satisfactory knowledge of the Early Learning Goals, and are skilled in dealing with young children. All staff plan well together, and make good use of the stepping-stones to match teaching to the needs of individual children, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. Teaching of communication, language and literacy, is satisfactory overall with strengths in developing pupils' speaking and listening skills, but there are weaknesses in the rigour with which reading and writing skills are taught. The teaching of mathematics is very well integrated with other areas of learning.

21. In the year since the opening of the nursery building, the nursery teacher has successfully trained staff, organised an efficient team and implemented changes to the curriculum. She is generous with advice, and has very good working relationships with all nursery helpers. Sometimes, her directions to staff are not specific enough about activities and use of resources. In sessions during the inspection, some staff did not fully understand what was required of them and session objectives were not always achieved. All staff have good knowledge of the children, and group them for activities by attainment or age. Assessment is underdeveloped in the daily sessions of 'child initiated' activities. At these times, when children are free to change activities at will, assessment procedures are inconsistent.

22. Teaching is good in English, mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2, and it is in these areas that pupils' achievement is good. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are implemented effectively and these skills are taught well. The good promotion of literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum makes a valuable contribution to the development of reading and writing. Regular opportunities for speaking help pupils to develop confidence in answering questions and in explaining what they know and understand; this was a notable feature in science lessons.

23. Teaching is also good in art and design, design and technology, and history. Though no lessons were seen in geography during the inspection, pupils' work suggests that teaching is well focused because they make good progress. Teaching is satisfactory in ICT and music.

24. Unsatisfactory teaching was seen mainly in one class and in PE lessons where there were weaknesses in lessons that were satisfactory overall. These stemmed from over direction of pupils' movements, which limited their creativity. Missed opportunities to evaluate

pupils' performance meant that pupils made too little progress in improving their skills. There are weaknesses, too, in the teaching of RE because teachers do not plan a close enough focus on the religious content of lessons, which are often too short to develop pupils' ideas in enough depth.

25. Weekly planning is detailed, particularly for literacy and numeracy, and sets out clearly how tasks are adapted for pupils who learn at different rates. This was a weakness in the last inspection that has been addressed well. Groups of pupils are well organised within classes, and teachers use resources effectively to stimulate discussion and learning. Interesting tasks capture pupils' and stimulate pupils to learn. Lesson planning is good and there is a clear focus on assessing how well pupils achieve the learning objectives of the lesson. However, assessment in the form of marking offers considerable scope for improvement. Although pupils' work is marked regularly and teachers acknowledge pupils' efforts with praise, there is not enough emphasis on what pupils need to do next to improve. As a result, pupils do not learn to practise and improve the things they get wrong.

26. The management of pupils is good throughout the school. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, to which the majority of pupils respond positively. Some of the youngest pupils in the Year 1 classes lack independence to work without close supervision, but older pupils have learnt to sustain a good level of concentration and interest on tasks. They work hard in most lessons. Relationships between adults and pupils, and between pupils themselves, are very good and contribute much to the good ethos for learning.

27. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. The part-time support teacher is highly skilled and provides very effective teaching for small groups of the lowest attaining pupils in parallel literacy and numeracy hours. She analyses the effectiveness of support strategies. The evidence suggests that most pupils are making satisfactory and often good progress. Most pupils are on Stage 1 of the register and, with additional support, attain national expectations.

28. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well taught. The close focus on developing key vocabulary underpins the effective teaching of those pupils who are at the early stages of speaking English. Small group work is most effective in this respect, where pupils are especially well supported to gain confidence in speaking.

29. Support staff are deployed well in most lessons, mainly to support lower attaining pupils and those with specific special educational needs. Teachers make sure that additional staff know what they are trying to achieve and this ensures a purposeful focus for activities. However, at times when the whole class is taught together, there is variability in the effective deployment of additional staff. When support staff sit close to pupils who need help, quietly asking questions and reinforcing what the teacher is explaining, pupils are often able to answer a question correctly and the resulting praise is a real boost to their self-esteem. However, some support staff do not get involved with pupils in this way and are observers rather than true participants in the learning process; this is inefficient.

30. Homework is used regularly and consistently in English and mathematics, and occasionally in other subjects of the curriculum. There is an expectation that pupils will read regularly at home and many take delight in doing so. The good support from most parents is a key contributor in pupils' progress in reading.

## HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

31. At the time of the last inspection, the school provided a broad and balanced curriculum for its pupils although some aspects of information technology were insufficiently emphasised. Inequalities were also noted in the time devoted to certain subjects between different classes in the same year group. The school at that time was in the process of improving its procedures for curriculum planning.

32. The benefits of these improved procedures are evident in the current inspection; there is a good range of learning activities on offer to pupils both in the nursery and in Key Stage 1. Provision now fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, although the time allocated and the strategies used to implement the locally Agreed Syllabus for RE are currently unsatisfactory. Nursery children learn through a combination of structured play and formal activities. In Years 1 and 2, appropriate emphasis is placed on the development of literacy and numeracy, while most other subjects have maintained a sufficiently strong profile in the school. However, the timetabling arrangements mean that some small blocks of time are not used as well as they might be, and some lessons extend beyond the pupils' concentration span depending on the nature of the task. The good amount of time given to art and design and to design and technology mean that there is plenty of scope for practical activities, but the short session after break in the afternoon is not long enough to develop the teaching of RE.

33. The whole curriculum is underpinned by the school's emphasis on a structured teaching programme of personal and social education which reflects the school's philosophy of developing the whole child, not just the narrowly academic side. There is a shared commitment by all staff to personal and social education as the foundation for successful learning. This strong foundation is extended by good links with the community including a wide range of visitors, such as the violinist who visited the nursery during the inspection, to broaden pupils' experience. The school is developing a programme in citizenship, which has attracted local and national recognition. An extensive programme of visits to interesting local venues widens the pupils' horizons.

34. At the time of the last inspection, the school provided equality of access to the curriculum for all its pupils, although work in lessons was not always planned to meet the needs of either the most able pupils or the less able pupils. Although the numbers of pupils with special educational needs remains low, the numbers of pupils for whom English is not their first language has increased. The school has adapted its support appropriately and both the pastoral and academic aspects of inclusion are now strong. The introduction of setting in three literacy and numeracy lessons each week enables the specific needs of pupils to be successfully addressed. In particular, the very skilled teaching for the small numbers of pupils with special educational needs through parallel literacy and numeracy hours effectively addresses their specific learning needs, while simultaneously giving them full access to the curriculum.

35. The school is constantly reviewing and refining its curriculum provision, and initiatives such as setting are regularly evaluated in the light of specific success criteria. An analysis of data from national tests is also used to assess equality of provision across classes in the same year group. The school aims to develop a curriculum that is personal and distinctive and, with this in mind, is developing schemes of work which use the best of local and national initiatives to augment the existing schemes of work developed after the last inspection.

36. Provision for pupils' personal development has improved in each element since the previous inspection and is now very good overall. The improvement in provision for social

development, from satisfactory to very good, is impressive. Provision for spiritual and cultural development has improved to a good level and provision for moral development is now very good.

37. Daily school assemblies are carefully planned to play a key role in pupils' personal development. The music played at the beginning and end of assemblies is well chosen to celebrate a wide range of musical traditions from across the world. It forms an uplifting introduction to a spiritual dimension that is developed through a prayer and usually a hymn of appreciation. The quality of worship varies, however, and the reference to a deity in hymns and prayers can be slight. In the best assemblies, though, prayers are spoken sincerely in simple language and set into a moment of silence to help pupils to focus their thoughts. There is a moral theme for the week, and this is very well developed day-by-day in each assembly and illustrated imaginatively using drama, stories and anecdotes. Pupils' achievement in all aspects of school life is celebrated in assemblies as well as in very good classroom displays. Assemblies are generally long and some pupils find it difficult to stay still, though the adults present help to keep them attentive and behaving well. Adults take a gentle and positive approach to control, which does not disturb the harmonious family atmosphere. As part of their social training, pupils are expected to go back to their classes after some assemblies without their teacher to guide them. The behaviour noted at these times was excellent because pupils clearly know what is expected of them and take great care to be on their best behaviour, without talking or jostling others.

38. The spiritual dimension is developed well in lessons, for instance in the appreciation of the natural world evident in pupils' paintings. Respect for pupils' different backgrounds and cultures is a strong feature of the life of the school. Teachers are particularly good at listening to pupils' experiences and answering their questions across a wide range of issues raised in class discussions. Though rules are displayed on classroom walls, it is the very good relationships between adults and pupils that lead to the very good provision for moral and social development. Teachers and assisting adults make constant reference to the need for honesty, truthfulness and fair dealing. Stories are well chosen to illustrate good values. Pupils learn to appreciate the needs of people and animals by helping raise funds for charities. Respect for others is developed well in the social interaction of each class. Classrooms are harmonious because pupils work well together and willingly help with routine tasks. Older pupils take on more formal duties, for instance as librarians. Lessons in art, geography and music make a good contribution to pupils' cultural development, though more could be made of opportunities in RE. Many visitors widen pupils' cultural awareness by representing community roles or different faiths or demonstrating special talents in the performing arts.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

39. The safe and caring environment maintained since the previous inspection has a positive effect on the standards pupils achieve. Very good procedures are established for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare. The teacher nominated as the responsible officer for child protection is conscientious and well informed. All staff understand child protection issues, and they discreetly implement the school's procedures. A child protection training session for staff is scheduled for the spring term.

40. The school has implemented the local authority's health and safety policy, including procedures for ensuring the safety of pupils on site and during out of school visits. Very good health and safety practice is supplemented by risk assessments for the site and for specific activities. The caretaker is trained in risk assessment procedures. Several members of staff are qualified in first aid, and all staff are sensitive to the needs of pupils. During the

inspection, a very small number of pupils were seen to be wearing unsuitable, potentially hazardous, earrings.

41. Very good supervision ensures pupils' safety in the playgrounds at break times and lunchtimes. Midday assistants are conscientious and attentive. They take close interest in the children's activities and, when requested, will organise and participate in team games. Teachers and other adults know the pupils well, and are skilled in assessing their needs. Pupils receive very good individual care and support from class teachers, and from the headteacher, who has good knowledge of individuals and families. The school's teaching assistants develop very good relationships with pupils. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are good, although largely informal, and are based on teachers' observations, knowledge and understanding of individuals. Teachers are expected to note pupils' significant developments, but no procedure is established to ensure consistency as pupils move through the school.

42. A special prospectus is part of the warm welcome offered to parents when their children join the nursery. On entry to the Reception Class or a Year 1 class, individual arrangements meet the needs of children from other nurseries, and those with no pre-school education. Pupils joining other year groups settle quickly and happily into the school's routines. Good procedures in Year 2 prepare pupils for transfer to the adjacent junior school.

43. A brief policy promotes very good behaviour in the school building and in the grounds. Agreed rules are displayed in most classrooms, and pupils conform to teachers' high expectations of behaviour. The anti-bullying policy is not displayed, but the provisions of the policy are implemented consistently and thoroughly. Parents and pupils have few concerns about bullying. They trust the process of discussion and reconciliation to resolve any incident reported to the staff or the headteacher. The school's informal system of merit awards acknowledges pupils' good behaviour, good work and effort. Sustained good work and personal qualities are rewarded with merit certificates, presented at weekly achievement assemblies. The school functions very well as a happy and orderly community.

44. Systems for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good, and contribute to the good levels of attendance in each year group. Pupils' unexplained absences from school are investigated, and regular support is provided by the educational welfare service.

45. The school has made very good progress in improving its assessment procedures. They were unsatisfactory at the time of the previous inspection and a key issue identified in that report. The school made improvement a high priority and appointed a co-ordinator to lead developments. As a result, there are now good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their progress. Good use is made of assessment information to guide curriculum planning.

46. Nursery achievement records are good. Children's work is carefully collected, annotated and compared closely with the LEA's baseline criteria. When children begin the reception year, their attainment is assessed using a baseline test. Their progress towards the Early Learning Goals recommended for their age group is monitored closely so that they make a smooth transition to the National Curriculum. In Years 1 and 2, procedures for assessing attainment and monitoring progress are best developed in English, mathematics and science. In other subjects, the adoption of nationally recommended programmes of study has ensured that teachers have guidance on the levels expected at the end of each unit of study and for each year group. Teachers assess and record pupils' progress in most subjects and this is generally satisfactory, but assessment is not well developed in music, PE and RE. As a result, teachers do not have the accurate information needed to set rigorous targets for their teaching and pupils' performance.

47. Assessment in English, mathematics and science is very thorough. Pupils' work is regularly assessed against detailed criteria based on National Curriculum expectations. Teachers meet at intervals to discuss samples of work to ensure that their judgements are accurate. Pupils are grouped in their classes according to their prior attainment, so that tasks and support can be readily adjusted to their different needs. This is taken further in three lessons a week in English and mathematics, when pupils in Year 2 are taught in sets with pupils of similar ability. The narrower range of needs in each set allows teachers and assistants to fine-tune the focus of their work. The school has begun to set targets for individual pupils, to highlight their most significant weaknesses so that they know how to improve, and to guide teachers in designing tasks to meet specific needs. However, it is a weakness that teachers do not use the results of their marking to set well-focused tasks for each pupil in the lessons that follow, so that they work on their specific needs.

48. Each year, the results in the national tests in English, mathematics and science are very thoroughly analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses in performance. The analysis is published for staff and governors, with a very perceptive commentary on the meaning of the figures. It explains how well boys, girls and pupils of different backgrounds have performed compared with each other and with national figures. As a result, staff and governors fully understand the implications of the data, and all concerned share a commitment to improvement that is well founded on precise knowledge. As a next step, targets are set for Year 2 pupils, based on their attainment records. These targets are built into the action plans of the co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science, and form part of the school improvement plan. It is a very good feature that the commentary on the English targets identifies the steps necessary to raise standards in specific elements of the subject. This level of forward planning is exemplary, and the school intends to develop it to the same level in mathematics and science.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

49. Parents' views of the school are generally favourable. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, very few parents indicated disagreement with positive statements relating to pupils' attitudes, behaviour, progress and achievement. However, about a third of parents were dissatisfied with the information provided about their children's progress, and about the provision of homework. A fifth thinks that the school does not work closely with parents, and nearly half were critical of the range of activities provided outside lessons. The inspectors examined closely each of the issues raised, and concluded that the school does work with parents, and that the quality of information is good. The provision of homework is satisfactory overall, and is good in English. The provision of activities after school is limited, as it is in many infant schools, but the curriculum is extended with interesting visits and visitors.

50. The school has good links with parents, who are welcome to visit at all times. The inspection confirms good two-way communication, and good relationships with the headteacher, class teachers and other members of staff. Parents and friends provide regular, valuable help in lessons to groups of pupils and to individuals. In some classes, the numbers of voluntary helpers regularly exceed the places available. Parents are keen to be involved, and they make a good contribution to their children's learning.

51. The friends' association is a partnership with the junior school sharing the Warden Hill site. The association organises regular social and fund raising events, and contributes significantly each year to the school's budget. Recent purchases have included benches and table units for the playground, shelving for the nursery, library books for each year group, and

numerous small items for classrooms. Very good co-operation is established between the friends and the governing body, and some families are active on both committees.

52. The quality of information for parents is good. The school prospectus conforms generally to requirements, but the 2000/2001 governors' annual report to parents omits legally required statements about school security and the facilities for disabled pupils. Newsletters are clearly written, and are informative about year-group and school events, and important dates. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are explained to parents each year at evening meetings, and specific guidelines are available to parents working at home with their children. The school's reading record books are used consistently, and are retained by children for use in the junior school.

53. At three consultation evenings each year, parents are clearly informed of their children's progress. The headteacher contacts the small number of parents who do not use these opportunities to discuss their children's work. Additionally, teachers participate in informal evenings where children show work to their parents. Annual written reports to parents are of satisfactory quality. Report sections for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science show in some detail what children know and can do, and how attainment may be improved. Much less information is available in other subjects.

54. Parents are well informed of the school's routines and expectations when their children enter the nursery, or join other year groups. However, parents of nursery children have understandable concerns about the LEA's admissions policy for children starting school at age 4. Although the policy appears to discriminate against younger children, the school's procedures ensure that children of average attainment at Warden Hill achieve national standards at the end of Year 2. In the nursery class, parents have the opportunity to work with their children at the start of each day. However, as children settle quickly into nursery routines, most parents choose to leave promptly. Parents of pupils in Year 2 are well informed about transfer to junior school. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed of progress, and they understand the school's procedures for support and discipline.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

55. The headteacher gives a strong personal lead to the school's work. She sets high expectations of behaviour and her philosophy is central to the school's purpose. She is supported ably by the senior staff, who share her commitment to giving pupils a breadth of opportunities that balance academic achievement with their personal development. There is a genuine commitment to equality of opportunity for all, and staff support all pupils according to their needs. Very good relationships, based on mutual respect, underpin the school's work. Its aims, which are encapsulated in the motto '*Here to learn, Here to help, Here to care*', are met successfully. The school has made a good level of improvement to many areas of its work since the last inspection, when there were weaknesses in several key aspects. This is due to the headteacher's determination to make the necessary changes and her ability to motivate staff to support her efforts. There is a good sense of teamwork among staff and a good capacity to continue to make improvements.

56. The role of the subject co-ordinator has developed significantly since the last inspection. Most subject leaders carry out their roles effectively by monitoring standards and the quality of teaching; they give their colleagues support and advice. However, not all co-ordinators are equally proficient in the subjects they lead. While the focus of development has rightly been on the core subjects to secure improvement in the quality of teaching and better standards, other subjects have not been developed enough. As a result, at present

there are weaknesses in the provision for RE and in the teaching of PE that adversely affect the standards pupils' achieve. The management of special educational needs is satisfactory. The co-ordinator maintains a general overview but as a full time class teacher is not involved in the day-to-day teaching and support of pupils with special educational needs. Monitoring of individual education plans (IEPs) is not close enough to address the variability in quality.

57. Governors are very committed to the school. Several are 'link governor' for a subject or aspect of the school's work, and give a good level of support to the headteacher and staff. They work efficiently through the committee structure and have a good understanding of their areas of responsibility. There is a good range of experience and professional expertise among members of the governing body. This enables individual governors to support the school with specific projects, such as the building of the nursery. They are well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses through detailed reports from the headteacher and by reports from those governors who are able to visit the school during the working day. They acknowledge that there is further scope for developing their role in monitoring the school first-hand. Governors are appropriately involved in devising the school development plan, which is a very detailed and wide ranging document providing a good basis for future developments.

58. Good monitoring procedures have been established since the last inspection and the staff are improving their skills in evaluating a range of information. The detailed analysis of performance data is used annually to identify strengths and weaknesses in reading, writing, spelling, mathematics and science. Targets are set for improvement and the school makes changes to the emphasis in the curriculum in order to address weaknesses. This systematic approach has been effective in raising standards. The school has identified the difference in the achievement of boys and girls and this issue has recently been the focus of the headteacher's' classroom observations.

59. Procedures for appraisal and performance management are satisfactory. The headteacher monitors thoroughly teaching quality and standards, and individual teachers are given feedback to help them improve. Support, guidance and training for individuals and the whole staff have been beneficial in improving the quality of teaching in the core subjects since the last inspection. However, at present, more support and guidance is needed for staff in teaching PE, and for a new member of staff to address weaknesses in subject knowledge.

60. The school makes good strategic use of its resources, and other funding, to ensure that there are enough teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. Most teachers are versatile and have good knowledge of infant school subjects. Teaching assistants are conscientious and enthusiastic. They provide generally good support for individuals and small groups of pupils. The administrative and cleaning staff, and lunchtime assistants, all contribute significantly to the smooth running of the school. Specific grants, such as the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant, and funding for pupils with special educational needs, are properly allocated.

61. Short-term financial planning is good, and longer-term developments are costed. The headteacher and administrator apply best value principles when negotiating purchases of goods and services. Good systems are established for checking and collating purchases, and paying creditors. The headteacher confirms that numerous amendments have been implemented to financial procedures, as required by the local authority's audit of 2000. The governors' finance committee has a good overview of the budgeting process, and systematically reviews areas of expenditure. Targeted additional spending in the current financial year will reduce the underspend of 2000/2001 to a figure close to the recommendations of the audit commission and the LEA.

62. Administrative routines are good. Very good use is made of the ICT skills of a technical assistant to help the school office function smoothly. The school's learning resources are good overall and the deficits noted in the last inspection have been addressed. Resources in ICT are satisfactory. Most computers are modern, and additional planned purchases will increase the number of machines to recommended levels by the end of 2002.

63. The accommodation is good, with adequate sized classrooms for the number of pupils. The building, which is enhanced by good quality displays of interesting artefacts and pupils' work, provides a pleasant environment for pupils and staff. The library is a very pleasant room, and is well furnished and stocked. The playgrounds and the shared field are in good condition and of adequate size. The school site and building are commendably clean, are free of vandalism, graffiti and litter, and generally present no risk to health and safety.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. Members of staff have worked together well to make improvements in a number of key areas and to successfully raise standards in many subjects. They now need to supplement planned school developments with a focus on the following:

- raise standards in RE and PE by:
  - \* improving teachers' subject knowledge;
  - \* increasing the time available for RE so that it can be taught in sufficient depth and;
  - \* increasing the rigour with which the provision for these subjects is monitored.  
(Paragraphs: 10, 19, 24, 32, 56, 137-141, 142-146)
- providing support for weaker teaching, ensuring that teachers have the skills to adapt joint planning in a way that is appropriate for their class.  
(Paragraphs: 19, 24, 94, 95, 104)
- making better use of teachers' marking of pupils' work to guide the learning that follows.  
(Paragraphs: 25, 47, 73, 84, 86, 101)
- reviewing the way that teachers use the time available throughout the teaching day.  
(Paragraphs: 32, 124, 127, 137, 143)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed   | 54 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 34 |

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

|                   | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| <b>Number</b>     | 1         | 6         | 21   | 21           | 5              | 0    | 0         |
| <b>Percentage</b> | 2         | 11        | 39   | 39           | 9              | 0    | 0         |

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents nearly two percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

|   | Nursery | YR – Y2] |
|---|---------|----------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)      | 33      | 178      |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | N/A     | 11       |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

|   | Nursery | YR – Y2 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs       | N/A     | 1       |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 2       | 23      |

#### English as an additional language

|   | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 15           |

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

|  | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 10           |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 7            |

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

|                           | %    |
|---------------------------|------|
| School data               | 94.2 |
| National comparative data | 93.9 |

#### Unauthorised absence

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 0   |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

|   |             |             |              |              |
|---|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year: | <b>Year</b> | <b>Boys</b> | <b>Girls</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|   | 2001        | 47          | 45           | 92           |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |                 | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|-----------------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above   | <b>Boys</b>     | 42      | 39      | 44          |
|   | <b>Girls</b>    | 40      | 41      | 44          |
|   | <b>Total</b>    | 82      | 80      | 88          |
| Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above | <b>School</b>   | 89 (91) | 86(92)  | 96 (87)     |
|   | <b>National</b> | 84 (83) | 86 (84) | 91(90)      |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |                 | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|-----------------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above   | <b>Boys</b>     | 41      | 44          | 43      |
|   | <b>Girls</b>    | 42      | 44          | 43      |
|   | <b>Total</b>    | 83      | 88          | 86      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above | <b>School</b>   | 90 (92) | 96(87)      | 93 (96) |
|   | <b>National</b> | 85 (84) | 89(88)      | 89 (88) |

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### Ethnic background of pupils

|                                 | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage      | 7            |
| Black – African heritage        | 2            |
| Black – other                   | 3            |
| Indian                          | 10           |
| Pakistani                       | 6            |
| Bangladeshi                     | 3            |
| Chinese                         | 3            |
| White                           | 142          |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 2            |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

### Exclusions in the last school year

|                              | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage   | 0            | 0         |
| Black – African heritage     | 0            | 0         |
| Black – other                | 0            | 0         |
| Indian                       | 0            | 0         |
| Pakistani                    | 0            | 0         |
| Bangladeshi                  | 0            | 0         |
| Chinese                      | 0            | 0         |
| White                        | 0            | 0         |
| Other minority ethnic groups | 0            | 0         |

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

**Teachers and classes****Qualified teachers and classes:****YR-Y2**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 8.5 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 21  |
| Average class size                       | 25  |

**Education support staff:****YR-Y2**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 10  |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 177 |

**Qualified teachers and support staff:****Nursery**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 1  |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 33 |
| Total number of education support staff  | 4  |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week    | 65 |
| Number of pupils per FTE adult           | 7  |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

|                       |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Financial year</b> | <b>2000/2001</b> |
|-----------------------|------------------|

|  | £         |
|--|-----------|
| Total income                               | 577165.00 |
| Total expenditure                          | 538178.00 |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 2665.00   |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 29775.00  |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 68762.00  |

**Recruitment of teachers**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years     | 2 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 2 |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)  | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)                           | 0 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out  
Number of questionnaires returned

|     |
|-----|
| 178 |
| 51  |

### Percentage of responses in each category

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 76             | 22            | 0                | 2                 | 0          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 47             | 41            | 8                | 0                 | 4          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 41             | 53            | 2                | 0                 | 2          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 22             | 42            | 20               | 10                | 6          |
| The teaching is good.  | 42             | 50            | 0                | 2                 | 6          |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 32             | 34            | 26               | 8                 | 0          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 61             | 27            | 12               | 0                 | 0          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 47             | 47            | 2                | 0                 | 4          |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 31             | 45            | 10               | 10                | 4          |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 43             | 47            | 6                | 0                 | 4          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 37             | 59            | 0                | 2                 | 2          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 8              | 34            | 32               | 12                | 14         |

### Other issues raised by parents

Parents are concerned that their children are disadvantaged when they start full-time school in September without having had any experience in a Reception Class.

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

65. Children enter the nursery in the term following their fourth birthday. Most have had pre-nursery experience at playgroups. In keeping with the local authority's admission arrangements, pupils receive half-time nursery education for three terms, until they enter school full-time in the term following their fifth birthday. As a result, some children allocated to Year 1 classes have one term reception experience, some have two terms and some have none. Parents are naturally concerned about this discrepancy in provision. However, the school has a transition arrangement for children who enter Year 1 directly from the nursery. This is carefully structured for literacy, numeracy and physical education. Inspection evidence confirms that these children successfully bridge the gap between nursery and Year 1. At the time of the inspection there were no Reception Classes.

66. The nursery is staffed by one full time teacher, one full time nursery nurse, two part time nursery nurses, and two part time learning support assistants who support pupils with special educational needs. The nursery nurses are experienced and well trained. They are particularly effective in dealing with children with special educational needs and English as an additional language so that they make satisfactory progress. Other nursery assistants are part-time, and are trained to varying standards. Teaching in the nursery is always satisfactory, and is sometimes good. Activities are well planned and matched to the needs of the children.

67. Baseline assessment and inspection evidence indicate that pupils begin full-time school with skills that are within a broadly average range for pupils' ages. Standards in the nursery are currently satisfactory, and are similar to the standards reported in the previous report. Most children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in all areas.

68. Resources are good overall, although resources for multicultural development are more limited. The school library and nursery classroom have adequate stocks of books suitable for pre-school children and for those in the Foundation Stage.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

69. The planning for personal, social and emotional development is good. As a result, children settle very quickly each day at nursery and they are very keen to attend. They speak very confidently, and communicate well with other children and with adults. They are eager to participate and to learn. Their concentration is good, and is often very good when working with adults, who help them to maintain a good focus on the tasks. When working at activities in 'child initiated' sessions, their concentration is generally satisfactory, though they tend to lose interest when the activities they select do not have clear purpose. Sometimes the activities on offer are insufficiently challenging for the oldest children. All relationships in the nursery are good. Children work very well together, and are particularly good at collaborating with a partner. For example, in pairs, they made attractive paintings about the story of the Owl and the Pussycat. They clear away efficiently at the end of sessions. Adults encourage the children to understand their own feelings, and the feelings of others. For example, in a good assembly seen during the inspection, the teacher explained the importance of 'making-up' with friends following a dispute. Children are encouraged to respect each other's cultures and beliefs, and their home languages are valued by staff. Children are confident, and are unafraid to make mistakes. They learn positive attitudes by observing the good relationships between their parents, carers and all adults in the nursery.

70. Behaviour in the Foundation Stage is good overall, and is sometimes excellent when children are using their observational skills in drawing and painting. Behaviour management is good, and staff are careful to explain the differences between right and wrong. Children learn to wait patiently for their turns in activities, and they amicably share equipment. Many children dress and undress independently, and higher attaining children manipulate zips and small buttons on their clothing. Staff constantly praise the children's efforts and personal kindnesses. Adults are sensitive to the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs, and with English as an additional language. Some books in home languages are available, and some jigsaws have multicultural themes.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

71. When children enter the nursery, their speaking and listening skills are average for their age, and are developed by good teaching. They listen carefully to instructions from the staff, and they exchange information when working and playing together. Sometimes, opportunities for talk are limited when activities are too closely directed. When teaching the class, nursery nurses sometimes fail to target questions at specific children. During the inspection, in a whole-school assembly, when nursery paintings were displayed, the teacher missed opportunities to let the children explain their work. Children of average attainment were clearly capable of speaking without inhibition to the whole school. Children's vocabulary is satisfactory, and is sometimes extended by the adults during lessons. For example, in a good music session during the inspection, a violinist introduced the words 'modulator' and 'plucking'. Older children understand the meaning of 'reflection'. Children of all attainments, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, have good understanding of rhyming. For example, they know that 'honey' rhymes with 'money'.

72. Children enter the nursery with a very wide range of attainment in reading and writing. A few of the oldest children can recognise initial and final sounds in spoken words. However, children are taught simultaneously the names and the sounds of letters, and are frequently confused when attempting to read simple words; this is unsatisfactory. They recognise their own names, but are not taught to recognise the names of others. During the inspection, a child with English as an additional language searched through a number of files, and found his own name by eliminating those he could not read. Children of all attainments understand that pictures tell stories, and that print conveys meaning. They turn the pages of familiar books, and older children recall story sequences, and speak enthusiastically about the pictures. Each day, parents choose books to read at home with their children. However, the teaching of reading skills is underdeveloped. Children of average attainment are not given enough opportunities to read familiar words and simple sentences. Staff use books imaginatively to stimulate activities in all areas of the curriculum, including art, and design and technology. For example, during the inspection, a child with special educational needs achieved his objective of making a small, detailed model of the Owl and Pussycat's boat.

73. Children's writing skills are variable, and are unrelated to their ages. In imaginative play, when talking on the telephone, children of all ages and attainments write pretend messages on pads, and discuss their conversations. Most children can write their first names in a random mix of capital and small letters. However, as written work is rarely corrected, they do not develop good habits of letter formation. A few higher attaining older children use phonic knowledge to write a few simple words but children of all abilities, including those with English as an additional language, do not achieve as much as they could in their writing because it is not a focus for specific teaching.

### **Mathematical development**

74. During the inspection, no formal mathematics lessons were timetabled. However, evidence from a range of sources shows that the teaching of mathematics is well integrated with all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children know that a violin has four strings, and they can relate the number of spots on a dice to the number of objects to be placed in a tray. Their counting skills are good, although, during the inspection, younger children did not use number rhymes to help improve their addition and subtraction. Most older children of average attainment recognise numbers to 10 and can count random objects to 12. A few higher attaining children can write some numbers from 1 to 10, although they sometimes write numbers backwards. They can total the numbers of objects in two small groups, and understand the meanings of the Early Learning Goals 'one more' and 'one less'. Their knowledge of shape is satisfactory. They can recognise a square, a triangle and a circle. In a dance lesson seen during the inspection, they immediately followed the teacher's instruction to form a large circle. However, older children of average attainment are unable to discuss the properties of shapes.

75. Children of all attainments, including those with English as an additional language, can copy simple horizontal and vertical patterns with pegs and a pegboard. Some understand the relative sizes of objects and have some experience of sorting objects by size. For example, a higher attaining child knew that a violin is 'small' and a guitar is 'big'. During the inspection, children were set the task of placing several spoons in order of size a nursery student was supporting this activity but she was unclear about how to adapt the task. Consequently, all children were offered a similar number of spoons, and the lowest attainers were unable to complete the objective without significant support. Children of all ages and all attainments use positional language confidently and understand the terms 'in front', 'behind' and 'by the side of'. In a recent walk through the woods, they knew that an arrow on a post identified their direction of travel. Most children know that money is exchanged for goods and they have made good, detailed drawings of £5 note.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

76. Attainment in this area of learning is average for their age when children start in the nursery. Good planning and some good teaching develops their knowledge well and most children will achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area. Nursery staff make good use of the Stepping Stones of the Early Learning Goals to ensure that all children have a good sense of time. The youngest children have been studying the sequence of the day, and older children the sequence of the year.

77. The oldest children of all attainments remember past events by looking at photographs. They remember buying a pottery hedgehog on a class outing. An autumn display adjacent to the school hall reminds children of their previous learning. Average children know that berries and acorns grow on trees, and that hedgehogs may be found in piles of autumn leaves. Older children of average attainment know that trees lose their leaves in autumn, and autumn precedes Halloween and Christmas. In a good session during the inspection, the teacher asked good questions to encourage children to think about the uses for various spoons. For example, children understood that a spoon with holes or slots would not hold water. Children of all ages and attainments made good progress in this session. In discussion, a higher attaining child knew that a guitar is played with the fingers, and a violin is played with a bow. Children have satisfactory skills in designing and making. During the inspection, all children made satisfactory musical instruments to produce sounds when shaken. They were provided with plastic pots, paper, elastic bands and adhesive, but the variety of materials was too small to allow wide experimentation. Consequently, most instruments were similar and lacked imagination. However, the nursery nurse questioned children effectively about the durability of their work. The children's skills in using computers

are not well developed and, in a session of 'child initiated' activities, most children were indifferent to the computer. No direct computer teaching was seen, although a learning support assistant worked for a short time helping a child with English as an additional language. He used the mouse accurately when asked to point to screen details or icons, but was unable to understand the program. A child with very limited experience in the nursery was seen to use a paint and erase program, but an irrelevant dialog box occupied much of the screen while he was working.

## **Creative development**

78. The programme for creative development is satisfactory overall, but is very good in some areas. For example, observational drawing and painting are strengths of the nursery. Children's observational skills are highly developed and, consequently, their drawings are good for their age. Good teaching by all staff develops their skills. During the inspection they made good observational drawings of violins and spoons. They shaded accurately, and included much fine detail. Similarly, they paint very well. A child of high attainment painted a picture of a drum, including the lanyard and stick. She said that the stick was coloured brown because it was made of wood. A child with English as an additional language painted a good picture from a display of bells and a tambourine. A learning support assistant provided good support in this activity, but missed opportunities to talk with the child about his work and reinforce the names of the instruments. All children enjoy singing in music lessons and assemblies. They have a good repertoire of songs and rhymes. Imaginative play and role-play are satisfactory. Children enjoy dressing up and role-playing with dolls houses, but this area of learning is underdeveloped and is not always purposeful. Child-initiated activities are not monitored closely enough to check that they are purposeful and broadening the children's skills.

## **Physical development**

79. The programme for physical development is satisfactory. Young children jump up and down, using both feet together. To instructions, they walk forwards and backwards confidently. They demonstrate good control by slowly stretching their arms and legs. Children are very sturdy, and they have very good co-ordination. In the outdoor area, they travel safely and confidently on hopper balls. Higher attaining children kick footballs accurately while running, and pass balls accurately with their feet or hands. They have some knowledge of basketball techniques, and make hopeful attempts at scoring basketball goals. During the inspection, a nursery nurse's effective demonstration of how to throw a ball through a vertical hoop helped a pair of average attaining children to make good progress. Children of all ages and all attainments travel confidently through tunnels, and balance on barrels. However, out door physical activity is sometimes unstructured. Adults supervise group activities, but do not always coach children to develop their skills in specific activities. Children's fine motor skills are satisfactory overall. They enter the nursery with a wide variety of experiences, and the lowest attaining children cannot hold scissors. During their three terms in the nursery, they make satisfactory progress in developing their ability to manipulate small items. For example, during the inspection, a young child was seen to be making a bracelet from paper clips and, in a well-organised activity, children of all levels of attainment used scoops to collect small objects floating in water.

## ENGLISH

80. Standards reached by pupils presently in Year 2 are above average in speaking, listening, reading and writing, and this is an improvement on the average standards noted in the previous inspection report.

81. Distinctive features of test results over recent years have been the good performance of boys, compared with boys nationally, and the very good proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 3) in writing. Factors that contribute to these successes include opportunities to write for real purposes from an early age, stimulating topics for writing, and frequent opportunities to write at length in other subjects. Boys were noted during the inspection as being particularly keen to write stories and develop their own ideas in factual accounts. The proportion of boys and girls who reach the higher level in reading is also above average. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection, secured through improved resources, including more stories outside the reading scheme to challenge higher attaining pupils, and a wider range of books to increase the appeal to boys.

82. Teachers stress the importance of careful listening, particularly when they teach the relationship between letters and sounds in the phonics programme. High expectations for attentiveness lift the performance of all, and pupils generally listen well. Teachers are also good listeners, which is a key factor in the good relationships they have with their classes. They are generally skilful in involving all pupils in discussions, and standards of speaking are often very high. As a result, pupils are confident in giving full answers to questions or offering voluntary contributions. They speak clearly in standard English. A few are shy and speak quietly, but most project well. Very occasionally a few pupils, mainly boys, become restless when discussions are too long and questioning does not actively involve them. Those with lower attainment or with English as an additional language are given strong encouragement and coaching by teachers and teaching assistants so that they play a full part. School assemblies are very well planned as a forum for public speaking, and pupils with higher attainment have frequent opportunities to develop their talents.

83. Standards in reading are good overall. Most pupils are very keen on reading, and this is very effectively boosted by the high standard of reading aloud of teachers in story-times, and by the attractive display of books around the school. Pupils have very good skills in sounding out unfamiliar words to find their meaning because the school has adopted a phonics scheme so that pupils are given regular and consistent instruction. As a result, those with higher attainment have a very good level of independence and are able to read aloud, accurately, books intended for much older pupils. Reading materials are clearly graded for difficulty, which generally ensures that pupils make smooth progress, though one instance was noted where the reading book of a lower attaining pupil was too difficult without considerable adult support. Pupils with special educational needs or with English as an additional language are given more help and careful monitoring so that they build on success. Most pupils read aloud expressively to emphasise meaning. They have a good understanding of what they read, and can explain it well because of their confidence in speaking. Parents give good support to the reading homework policy. Most pupils have favourite authors and can explain their preferences fluently. They mainly choose fiction, though they have a sound understanding of how to find information in non-fiction books. Little use was noted during the inspection of non-fiction books in other subjects to challenge higher attainers, though use is planned to increase through the year as the skills of older pupils develop.

84. Pupils learn to write for a good range of purposes, including stories, factual accounts, poetry and book reviews, in English and in other subjects. Because of this frequent practice, pupils develop confidence in writing independently at an early stage and show enjoyment in the activity. They are well supported by the structured teaching of spelling and grammar, by shared texts that provide writing models, and by relevant and exciting subjects. They are taught how to plan longer stories using 'writing frames' to sequence the work. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are able to join in this work because they are given simpler versions and additional support so that they make good progress in expressing their meaning. By age seven, most pupils express their meaning clearly in personal accounts, writing a series of connected sentences using full stops and capital letters correctly. Pupils with average attainment, or higher, have a good grasp of conventions for beginnings and endings of stories. They use a good range of vocabulary in descriptions. Progress in handwriting is good, and some pupils develop a joined style. There is a small amount of word-processing, though this is not a major feature. Work is well presented, especially when it is intended for display, such as the "Lost Pet" posters and accounts of the Lighthouse Keeper's life, based on the themes of shared class readers. Standards of spelling are generally good. Word lists and dictionaries are usually available, and, in some lessons in other subjects, key words are spelt on the board and discussed beforehand. However, not enough is expected of older pupils in checking their work before handing it in, and instances were noted of repeated errors in punctuation and spelling that were not noted in the marking.

85. Teaching is good overall. It was good or better in two thirds of lessons seen and satisfactory in the remainder. One lesson was excellent and two were very good. Teachers have a good understanding of the targets of the literacy framework, which gives their plans a clear direction. Shared texts are well chosen for their appeal and quality of language. Nevertheless, not enough time is spent in some lessons enjoying the shared text or in reading it aloud to develop expressive reading and improve the confidence of lower attaining pupils through repetition. Discussions with pupils are generally brisk, with the intention of involving and challenging all to learn and remember. Teachers generally use the board well to show examples of language features, though standards vary and best practice needs to be identified and shared. Effective features of the best lessons were the wide variety of activities at a brisk pace that held pupils' interest as they practised basic skills. Such features were placed in the context of very thorough preparation of resources, well-established routines and high expectations for pupils' attentiveness, effort and quality of work. In some classes, particularly effective use is made of writing tablets, on which pupils try out answers for themselves before holding them aloft for the teacher to correct errors and praise successes.

86. The match of work to different levels of attainment has improved since the previous inspection. Now each task is designed with a simpler and a more difficult version, ensuring an appropriate match to three bands of attainment in the class. Additionally, teaching assistants are well deployed to help one group, generally that with lower attainment. Nevertheless, teachers in some lessons do not concentrate their help on specific groups as they work on a rota basis, as recommended in the National Literacy Strategy, so they do not give consistent help to all pupils. This was particularly noticeable for pupils with higher attainment in the lessons observed; they work very well independently, with a high level of commitment and enjoyment, but they need more focused instruction to extend their learning further. Most teachers, but not all, make good use of the final review to develop pupils' speaking skills and reinforce their learning of language targets. This time was particularly well used by one teacher who had written a version of the same task as the pupils, but had

made many mistakes. Pupils were very keen to practise their proof reading skills and pounced on her mistakes, so reinforcing their grammar knowledge. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but in general they do not make enough use of marking to set individual tasks in following lessons. Pupils do not regularly correct their own work, extend it or do exercises to improve identified weaknesses.

87. Management of the subject is very good, and has secured significant improvement since the previous report. Results of national tests are very thoroughly analysed to find how provision can be improved. The co-ordinator's action plan is particularly helpful in identifying the actions needed to raise standards. Assessment procedures are good, and they are seen as the key to raising standards, though more could be done to monitor progress in speaking and listening. The school now places Year 2 pupils in sets, according to their level of attainment, for three lessons a week. This arrangement is proving successful in providing more closely focused instruction. Challenging targets are set for each year group and for individual pupils, though marking needs to make more specific reference to the progress of individuals towards their targets. Good progress has been made in developing resources, and the newly developed library is a very attractive resource to promote interest in reading. The National Literacy Strategy has been secured well through monitoring of lessons and planning. Targets for future monitoring include: the use of teachers' time during group tasks; the use of the final review session to reinforce the lesson's targets; the use of marking in setting future work for individuals and groups.

88. To raise pupils' interest and enjoyment, the curriculum is very effectively extended through an exciting range of events, including a book week and visitors such as a storyteller and puppeteers. Very effective use is made of a book club to encourage book ownership, whilst raising funds for the library. Teachers show considerable commitment and imagination in setting up stimulating displays, and print of all kinds is very well displayed in all areas. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development and to the ethos of the school.

## **MATHEMATICS**

89. The quality of learning in mathematics is good in Key Stage 1, and attainment at age seven exceeds national expectations. Pupils enter Year 1 with broadly average attainment, many having had little or no time in a Reception Class. Although most pupils have met the Early Learning Goals, some of the youngest pupils in Year 1 have difficulty adjusting to the structure of lessons. By the age of seven, the variations in early years experience are less evident, although fewer of the younger pupils exceed the nationally expected level in national tests.

90. Standards have risen since the last inspection when attainment was judged to be above average in Year 1, but unsatisfactory progress in Year 2 was leading to only average attainment by the end of the year. The majority of pupils now make good progress across both years. In particular, more able pupils are sufficiently challenged and the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level than expected Level 3 has risen significantly. Less able pupils are well supported and many achieve nationally expected standards by the end of Year 2. Pupils whose first language is not English are also well supported, make good progress and are strongly represented in sets for higher attaining pupils.

91. Evidence from the current inspection suggests that most pupils in Year 2 are already working comfortably at nationally expected standards early in the school year, with about one third of pupils demonstrating the potential to reach the higher Level 3. A small group of

about ten pupils has been identified as needing additional support to reach national standards. Some of these are withdrawn for specifically targeted support, when pupils are set by ability in mathematics, and they also receive extra support in class mathematics lessons.

92. Pupils in Year 1 are familiar with a hundred square. They use it confidently to identify odd and even numbers, identify missing numbers and count on in fives and tens. One pupil, when doubling 32, counted down the hundred square in three lots of ten then added two. By early in Year 2, most pupils can identify the missing number in number sentences to ten. The more able do so to twenty. Two thirds of pupils develop good strategies for solving mental number problems. For example, one pupil in a 'middle' set, reasoned that "if double eight is sixteen, double seven must be sixteen minus two". A few very able pupils have excellent recall of addition, subtraction and multiplication facts to one hundred. Pupils are familiar with a wide range of different ways of recording their work, through tally charts, Venn diagrams, mapping diagrams and magic squares. Teachers give pupils good opportunities to apply their knowledge in a range of structured and open-ended problem-solving activities. Pupils take a pride in their work, and work in pupils' books is generally well presented.

93. Pupils are grouped by ability for three of the five mathematics lessons each week and this is proving to be an effective means of addressing the needs of all pupils. Good use of assessment to monitor pupils' progress results in termly revision of the composition of these 'sets' and pupils frequently move up or down according to the progress they are making. In whole class lessons, additional support helps lower attaining pupils to make satisfactory progress. Most teachers provide a range of tasks that match the learning needs of pupils of different abilities.

94. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good overall although it varies between classes, especially in Year 2, where one lesson was unsatisfactory. However, this is a considerable improvement on the last inspection, when over one third of teaching in mathematics was unsatisfactory. Inequalities in provision are partially offset by the grouping arrangements. Although teachers in the same year group plan together, in the most successful lessons teachers adapt the planning effectively to the needs of their particular pupils, and are imaginative and enthusiastic in devising interesting activities to extend pupils' learning. Most lessons proceed at a brisk pace. In the best lessons, teachers ask increasingly challenging questions, and tasks help pupils build successfully on what they already know and can do. Teachers encourage pupils to explain their thinking and use praise effectively to acknowledge individual achievement. As a result, pupils are not afraid to make mistakes.

95. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, the activities are insufficiently related to the learning objectives and pupils become confused about the purpose and process of the tasks. Although there are examples of good marking, in one class there is a significant amount of unmarked work. In general, marking is limited to ticks and congratulatory comments, which provide little guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work.

96. Assessment is generally used effectively to guide planning. The results of national tests and ongoing assessment are carefully analysed to identify areas requiring additional emphasis. Flexibility in planning allows one numeracy hour each week to be dedicated, as required, to assessment, reinforcement or extension of pupils' learning. Procedures for recording pupils' progress are detailed and comprehensive.

97. The co-ordination of mathematics is satisfactory. Although good improvement in some aspects of the subject has led to higher standards, differences in the quality of teaching have not been sufficiently identified and addressed. Additional support is needed to raise all teaching in mathematics to the level of the best and to ensure that the school's marking policy is applied consistently. Resources are good and are used effectively to support learning.

## SCIENCE

98. Pupils achieve well to attain standards that are above average for their age. There has been a reasonably consistent trend of improvement in standards since the last inspection. Nearly all pupils attain the levels expected for their age, and a good proportion are challenged by teachers to work at levels above age related expectations. Very few pupils do not attain the standards expected at this stage of the year. Teachers' assessments show that girls attain at least as well as girls nationally, and boys attain better than boys nationally. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those from ethnic minority groups achieve similarly to their peers. Many of these pupils are among the higher attainers. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well with the support of learning assistants.

99. The strong emphasis within the curriculum on scientific investigation and experimentation is having a positive impact on the pupils' understanding of scientific processes and on their ability to ask questions. They learn about 'fair tests' by changing some features but keeping others the same and try to predict what might happen when asking questions such as '*Will a toy car travel the same distance on a different surface?*' or '*How can we make the car travel further?*' Having carried out an investigation to answer the question, pupils draw simple conclusions from their observations. This structured approach to developing pupils' enquiry skills was a weakness in the last inspection that has been tackled rigorously by the school. Teachers give pupils a clear framework for recording what they find out, which is helpful in developing their understanding of how to present findings in a systematic way. Pupils are particularly good at observing what happens and record their results carefully through drawings and in tables. Teachers are beginning to challenge pupils by getting them to record observations in their own way, but there is scope for extending this expectation.

100. Pupils' good speaking, writing and drawing skills help them to convey effectively their understanding of scientific concepts. For example, pupils' drawings of a complete circuit show that they understand what is needed to make the bulb light up. They have experimented with objects made of different materials to complete a circuit and know that some work and some do not. Teachers have introduced higher attaining pupils to the terms 'conductor' and 'insulator' and pupils have sorted objects into these two categories - a task that is usually done with older pupils. From this work, pupils draw conclusions such as '*The paper clip makes the bulb light up because it is metal.*' However, so far this term, pupils have not used computers enough to present information and data from investigations.

101. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows a good pace of work in science. There are slight variations between classes in Year 2 in the extension activities given to higher attaining pupils, and in the quality of teachers' marking. Throughout the school, marking is satisfactory in acknowledging pupils' efforts but tends to focus on errors in literacy skills. Just occasionally, teachers follow up pupils' work with a focused question that makes them think more deeply about the scientific element of their learning; this is good practice.

102. Teaching and learning are good, and have improved since the last inspection. Teachers give pupils plentiful opportunities to explore for themselves and to observe natural

features of the world. For example, in a lesson in Year 1, pupils used their senses to explore a range of sounds, tastes, smells and objects. This activity capitalised on pupils' natural curiosity and enthusiasm, and also made good use of their well-developed observation skills. Where this lesson was best, the teacher made good links with other aspects of scientific knowledge, and extended pupils' understanding of materials by incorporating a good range of vocabulary that reinforced learning about the properties of the objects they were handling.

103. Teachers' good focus on key scientific vocabulary ensures that pupils understand and use terms correctly. This is helpful for all pupils, but particularly for those who speak English as an additional language and for those who have special educational needs. Lower attaining pupils often have the support of an adult during lessons, and this helps them to tackle written work that they might otherwise struggle to complete.

104. In one lesson seen, teaching was unsatisfactory because the teacher did not have the background knowledge and experience to adjust the planned lesson when pupils did not respond in the way she expected. In most other lessons teaching was good. The scrutiny of pupils' work supports the judgement that teaching is well focused and helps to increase pupils' knowledge in a meaningful way. Well-organised activities are interesting and teachers use a good range of resources to stimulate curiosity and to promote pupils' practical and investigative skills.

105. Good leadership of the subject has resulted in a good level of improvement since the last inspection. Good planning encompasses national guidance within the local authority's scheme of work to give a structured framework for developing, in a systemic way, pupils' knowledge and skills. Teachers plan together to share ideas but teachers do not always interpret plans in the same way and this leads to some variations in the quality of pupils' learning.

106. Assessment procedures are good. Teachers assess pupils' understanding at the end of each unit of work to build up a comprehensive picture of attainment and progress over time. They set individual targets for pupils, which are reviewed during the year to ensure that they represent enough challenge. The analysis of assessment data is comprehensive and detailed. The information from analysis is used well to monitor the attainment of different groups of pupils and to make changes to the curriculum to address areas of weakness. For example, differences in the attainment of boys and girls, noted two years ago, prompted teachers to evaluate the way in which they present science activities to pupils. Science lessons are monitored with this in mind. Teachers are aware of these issues and ensure that they treat pupils equitably during lessons, for example in their questioning of both boys and girls. Last year the difference in the attainment of boys and girls was much narrower, but the school continues to monitor the pattern of attainment closely.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

107. Standards in art and design have improved considerably since the last inspection, when attainment by the end of Year 2 was judged to be average. Evidence from lessons, displays and the portfolios of moderated work indicate that, from the nursery onwards, standards are now higher than expected for pupils' ages. The good observational skills

developed in the nursery are built on successfully as pupils move through the school. Information and communication technology is used well to support pupils' learning. Although art and design skills are used to support other curriculum areas, the emphasis on the development of specific artistic skills is the basis for the high standards in the subject.

108. Lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their own ideas and creativity within a structured framework. By Year 2, pupils have developed good colour mixing skills, use paint with confidence and show a sophisticated sense of composition in their work. For example, in their work on landscape, pupils show an understanding of the concept of background and foreground in their paintings. They convey a sense of place in their paintings of India, a rainforest, and an arctic environment. They develop an artistic vocabulary so that, for example, blue is not just blue but 'periwinkle blue' or 'brilliant blue'.

109. The quality of teaching in art is never less than satisfactory and it was good in three out of four lessons seen. In the best lessons, teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to demonstrate techniques and support pupils' learning. They encourage pupils to evaluate their own work, and to adapt it in the light of specific criteria. They give more able artists plenty of scope to develop their own ideas.

110. The art co-ordinator provides good support for colleagues and has arranged additional training through links with the local secondary school. As a result, most teachers are confident with a wide range of skills, techniques, and media, including textiles, three-dimensional work and clay work. The co-ordinator has monitored the teaching of art throughout the school, often with a specific focus in mind, and sometimes in a supporting role. An extra-curricular art club in the summer term involves about half of all pupils and raises enough money to pay for a visiting artist in residence. This in turn provides an additional focus for the introduction of new skills and helps to reinforce the centrality of art to the ethos of the school. Other high profile initiatives include the school's contribution to the millennium tapestry.

111. A portfolio of moderated work is maintained for each year group, although assessment procedures for recording individual pupils' progress have yet to be established. However, the use of sketchbooks is well developed and provides an ongoing record of progress across the key stage. The school has developed its own scheme of work which combines the best elements of local and national guidelines with successful elements from the existing school scheme. Resources are good, and are well used to support pupils' learning.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

112. Pupils attain standards that are better than expected for their age in many aspects of the subject, and this represents good improvement since the last inspection. In particular, increased emphasis on the design element helps all pupils to achieve well, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

113. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows a greater amount of recorded work than is often found at this age and includes simple written evaluations. Pupils have a good understanding of the process of designing, planning and making. For example, pupils' designs for puppets include a list of items needed and the tools that they will use. During the making process pupils' good drawing skills and accurate cutting of materials, using a template, raises the overall quality of the finished article. They have a clear knowledge of how best to join pieces of fabric. They realise the value of making a paper mock up of a

finger puppet in order to check that their design will work. The whole process has been taught effectively in a step-by-step approach that means pupils develop their skills in a sequential way. This is because teachers' planning is based firmly on a well structured scheme of work.

114. Pupils' finished finger puppets show good attention to joining techniques; the stitching is fine and neat, exemplifying pupils' dexterity. While working, some pupils can talk about whether or not the article is successful. They judge this in several ways by referring to whether or not the finished article looks like their original design and whether it can be used in the manner intended. They are clearly used to this level of evaluation but are less sure about suggesting what might be improved.

115. Teaching is good. Well planned and regular opportunities to practise essential skills means that pupils are adept when it comes to assembling and finishing articles. This raises the level of satisfaction they get from the wide-ranging activities. Pupils are taught to consider how they cut fabric so that they are not wasteful, and practise different ways of joining materials so that they can see for themselves which techniques are most suitable. Lessons often begin with a useful reminder of previous learning, and clear explanations help pupils to know what to do. Teachers question pupils closely to check their understanding of what they have done and to rehearse the step-by-step process. Some demonstrations are over directed and this limits opportunities for creativity, but pupils are frequently reminded to refer back to their design when choosing materials, and do so readily. Pupils enjoy the practical nature of the tasks and are fully absorbed during lessons. The purposeful working atmosphere stems mainly from teachers' good preparation and organisation; materials and tools are readily available when pupils need them. Additional adults give good support so that all pupils have help when they need it and achieve a measure of success. Groups are monitored closely to ensure safety in the use of tools. Teachers keep informal notes of pupils' progress as they complete units of work, and are aware of which pupils need greater challenge and which require more support.

116. The subject is managed satisfactorily, and jointly, by the headteacher and deputy headteacher as an interim measure, since the co-ordinator left at the end of last year. A strength of the provision is the thorough way in which the breadth of the curriculum is covered as pupils move through the school. In part this is achieved because of the good amount of time allocated for design and technology each week. Good links are made with other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 1 have followed written instructions in literacy to make a jam sandwich and a pop-up card, and have designed hats for Dr Seuss. As part of a broader topic on homes, pupils designed and made model rooms, which show good skills in assembling and joining materials and simple finishing techniques. However, links with ICT are under developed at present. Past projects incorporating design and technology skills have left a lasting mark on the school's environment. For example, the pupils' designed animal motifs that a local artist incorporated into the stained glass window of the library, and pupils' designs for badges, drawn using a computer package, are now in use by visitors to the school.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

117. By age seven, the overall standard of pupils' work is above that expected for their age. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were satisfactory. All pupils now make good progress because the curriculum has been well constructed, following national guidelines, to develop skills in small steps across a broad range of topics.

118. Pupils learn to interpret maps, atlases and globes to find their own home in relation to the school and the world beyond. By Year 2, their maps of the locality show a good grasp of scale and significant detail, founded on the study of very good resources, which include street maps of the area in different scales, and aerial photographs. Their understanding of familiar surroundings is deepened through fieldwork, such as touring the neighbourhood and making a tally of its facilities. Very good use is made of visits further afield, for instance to a safari park, to stimulate work of a good standard; maps clearly show the relative locations of main features, and written accounts note where the animals come from. The topic on India is very well resourced to give pupils a good understanding of many aspects of a different culture. Their statements and lists of differences show that their knowledge of the wider world is developing well.

119. No lessons were observed, but evidence of pupils' work and teachers' plans shows that considerable care is given to developing skills and knowledge in a clear sequence through stimulating experiences. Pupils make good progress and produce work of a high standard because teachers have high expectations for its quality and range. The nature of tasks allows pupils of all abilities and backgrounds to reach their full potential. For instance, the highest attaining pupils are able to write full accounts and extend their knowledge using reference books. Pupils with lower attainment express their learning in discussions and record it in drawings and simple statements, with adult support. The use of art as a means of recording learning is particularly impressive. The level of detail in pupils' paintings and drawings shows a good understanding, for instance of the distinctive features of housing in rural India and the effects of autumn on the natural world. Pupils' very high level of interest is reflected in the detail and care taken in maps, drawings and writing.

120. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator advises on resources and termly plans. Resources are of good quality, and good use is made of visits into the local community and further afield, to give pupils practical experience in applying their knowledge and skills. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

## **HISTORY**

121. By age seven, the overall standard of pupils' work is above that expected for their age. Standards have improved since the last inspection when they were satisfactory.

122. Pupils aged seven have a clear sense of what has changed over time in the context of their own families and everyday life. They have good skills in identifying and interpreting evidence from a range of sources, including documents, pictures and objects from the periods studied. For instance, they learn about changes over time in toys, household equipment and seaside holidays. The impact on their learning is strong because of the good quality of the resources and the range of teaching techniques used. In discussion, pupils in Year 2 show a good understanding of causes and consequences of major events, such as the Fire of London. They have an impressive recall of facts about the causes and effects of the fire, and understand the significance of Samuel Pepys and his diary. They can interpret details of the progress of the fire from evidence in contemporary paintings.

123. Pupils of differing abilities and backgrounds make good progress because the nature of the work allows all to reach their full potential. For instance, the highest attaining pupils are encouraged to write longer and more detailed commentaries and to extend their

knowledge by using reference books. Pupils with lower attainment have good opportunities to express their learning in discussions and to record it in drawings and simple statements, with adult support. Teachers have high expectations for the quality of all pupils' work, and they respond well, taking pride in their results.

124. The standard of teaching is good overall. Teaching is carefully planned and prepared, with appropriate targets for skills and knowledge drawn from the programme of study for the year group. All lessons seen were satisfactory or better, and one was very good. In each, the opening discussion provided a very good opportunity to review earlier learning. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are encouraged to take a full part in such discussions, and they do this very well. The instruction that follows is well focused and supported by good quality resources to illustrate key facts of the topics studied and to stimulate interest. As a result, pupils show keen interest and are eager to learn precise details. Teachers are imaginative in using techniques that have a strong impact on learning. For instance, teachers in Year 2 took on the character of an eyewitness to tell of their experiences on the day the Great Fire broke out in London, using tone and gesture to dramatise their emotions. Pupils responded very well, listening attentively and asking questions that showed the technique had brought the event to life in their imagination. In the very good lesson, all parts were well paced so that pupils' attention was held very well through each of the different activities. However, the afternoon time slot for history is long for pupils of this age, and attention was not sustained so well in the other classes, particularly when pupils had been sitting for too long on the floor listening to discussion or instruction. It was a good feature of all lessons that they ended with a review of what had been achieved, so that the teacher could correct misunderstandings and praise good work.

125. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The policy and scheme of work have been revised, and now show clearly how pupils' skills and understanding are to be developed. There are satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' attainment, though records of their progress are not kept consistently in all classes. There are good links with other subjects, particularly art and English. Pupils study famous paintings to find historical evidence, and deepen their understanding through creative writing and drama. Opportunities to write at length and to read information in reference books make an effective contribution to their literacy skills. Resources are good, and particularly good use is made of the accounts of past experiences by visiting adults, and homework discussions with parents and grandparents. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

126. A key issue in the previous inspection report required the school to raise pupils' attainment in ICT. Standards are now satisfactory, and are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2. This is a significant improvement because changes to the National Curriculum have required new, powerful, hardware and software, and an increased level of teacher expertise.

127. In Year 1, pupils' mouse control is often uncertain because their previous experience is limited. In a session observed, pupils were clear about the program objective of completing a dot-to-dot exercise, numbered from 1 to 20, but their lines connecting the dots were indecisive. However, following a visit to a safari park, pupils used a painting program to create good quality pictures of animals. Most of the animals are recognisable, and many have clear characteristics. Pupils' keyboard skills are satisfactory. Pupils of average

attainment can type their names, using capitals and small letters. Teachers clearly demonstrate the use of the mouse and the keyboard. However, in a session following a PE lesson, pupils were very slow to change their clothes, and much time was lost. Only six pupils in this class of thirty completed a simple keyboard skills exercise.

128. In Year 2, pupils' theoretical knowledge of word processing is considerably more advanced than their keyboard skills. In a good lesson, the teacher demonstrated how the insertion of line breaks changed a block of text into a familiar nursery rhyme. Pupils quickly understood the technique, but were slow when applying it. Similarly, with time and some support, they corrected and edited text. In this lesson, a group of pupils demonstrated good knowledge and use of a digital camera. Pupils of average attainment in Year 2 readily save and print their work. With prompting, they can explain some of the wider uses of computers. They have some understanding of control technology. For example, in a session seen, a group of pupils followed instructions to control the forward movement of a floor robot, and program a quarter turn.

129. Pupils' progress is satisfactory, and their attitudes are good. They share keyboards amicably, and help each other when difficulties arise. Good links are established between ICT and most other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 2 have made the school's attractive badges for visitors. They scanned their designs, in full colour on A4, reduced them to a suitable size, and printed multiple images on a single sheet. In art, they have used a painting program to develop many complex patterns, with numerous colours. A few pupils showed considerable restraint by restricting their designs to simple patterns and few colours. However, there has been little use of computers in science so far this term.

130. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and is sometimes good. The technical assistant has led and supported the teachers in developing their ICT skills. Although teachers' subject knowledge is at least satisfactory, they have identified the need for more training to supplement their enthusiasm for the subject. Assessment is satisfactory, and is linked to learning objectives in teachers' planning. However, pupils' use of computers is inconsistently monitored in classes. Few teachers have systems for measuring individual experience and progress.

131. Pending the appointment of a co-ordinator, ICT is managed temporarily by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. They are knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and they implement a satisfactory whole-school policy for the subject. The school has an Internet policy, but is not yet connected to the web.

132. Resources overall are satisfactory. At least two modern machines are installed in each classroom, and a small number of older machines are in reserve. Accommodation is satisfactory, although some rearrangement of classrooms will be necessary when additional machines are installed.

## **MUSIC**

133. Attainment in music is satisfactory and matches national expectations for pupils in Year 2. The previous report did not include judgements about teaching, or pupils' attainment and progress.

134. In Year 1, pupils can recognise a number of brass instruments. They have completed detailed drawings of a trombone, a cornet and a French horn. They know a variety of ways to generate sounds with their hands. In a short, but effective, lesson led by the music co-ordinator, they flapped and rubbed their hands, clapped loudly and softly, and clicked their

fingers. They were aware of differences between similar sounds. They confidently volunteered to sing duets with the teacher, illustrating sounds they had created. This brief session had good pace throughout, and fully engaged pupils' attention. In a parallel session, teaching was satisfactory but progress was inconsistent because the pace was too slow.

135. In Year 2, pupils are introduced to musical vocabulary, including terms such as 'dynamic', 'pitch' and 'tempo'. They understand how to sing 'fast' and 'slow', and 'high' and 'low'. In a good lesson, they experimented with round singing, and were keen to improve their performance. In this lesson, they began some simple composition, attempting to create the noise of wind and rain. They wrote simple plans, incorporating a variety of instruments. Subsequently, they played their compositions, and discussed why some effects were particularly successful. In discussion, pupils in Year 2 remembered the music composed for their own rain song, and demonstrated the instruments used to represent rainfall of various intensities. They had good recall of the sitar and other musical instruments brought into school by an Indian visitor. They had written about the visitor, and made full colour drawings of her costume. This topic included good links with geography, art and literacy. All pupils enjoy singing and standards are good throughout the school. They pronounce words very clearly, and most can follow a melody and achieve high notes. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are fully involved in music.

136. Teachers' planning for music is good. They plan well together, although lesson outcomes are variable, and assessment inconsistent. The co-ordinator has satisfactory subject knowledge and expertise, and is allocated time to monitor and support teaching and learning through the school. Accommodation and resources are good. Some eastern instruments are displayed attractively in the school to stimulate pupils' interest.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

137. Standards in PE are below national expectations at the end of Year 2. The previous report judged standards in dance and games to be in line with national expectations. Pupils' attitudes have improved since the previous inspection. They now change their clothes for PE lessons, but most are very slow to dress and undress, and staff have few strategies to accelerate the process. Often, slow changing causes late starts to PE lessons, and delays to subsequent lessons. Progress in lessons remains unsatisfactory, as it was previously, mainly because of weaknesses in teaching.

138. In Year 1, warm up sessions are brief and unfocused, and pupils do not understand their importance. In a satisfactory dance lesson, children moved in a variety of ways in imitation of animals. They stomped, slithered and stretched, and twisted their bodies to instructions on an audiotape. All pupils listened carefully, and a pupil with special educational needs was very well supported and so able to take a full part. Although some higher attaining pupils used their own ideas to extend the taped instructions, the lesson overall was closely directed, and limited the progress of most pupils. In a lesson in the playground, teaching was unsatisfactory. The teacher's instructions were sometimes inaudible and the teacher did not clearly demonstrate throwing and catching techniques to improve pupils' skills. Many of the balls used were of varying sizes and types and unsuitable for the lesson. There were no opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work and the work of others.

139. Most pupils in Year 2 do not have satisfactory understanding of space. They tend to bunch together, and teachers do not explain the importance of having room to move freely, without impeding others. In a satisfactory lesson, pupils jumped and landed correctly, and higher attaining pupils achieved neat forward rolls by tucking in their heads and shoulders. Although work in this lesson was unimaginative, the teacher's organisation and management were good, and pupils' attitudes and behaviour were good. In Year 2, pupils' ball skills improve, but their dance skills are not developed. For example, in an unsatisfactory dance lesson, the teacher directed pupils to move as marionettes. She did not discuss the characteristics of puppet movements, or question pupils about their own experiences with puppets. Consequently, the class had few original ideas for movements, and progress was slow.

140. Overall, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory with one lesson in each year group judged unsatisfactory. Although other lessons were taught satisfactorily overall, they included several common weaknesses. Some teachers wear unsuitable day clothes and shoes for PE lessons. Most teachers are not active participants in lessons: they tend to direct activity from one place in front of the children. Generally, they do not allow enough time in lessons for pupils to improve their work through self-evaluation or evaluation of the work of others. Pupils' attitudes are generally good and those with special educational needs and English as an additional language are well integrated. In lessons, their experiences are similar to the experiences of other pupils.

141. The subject co-ordinator has not developed her skills since the previous inspection. Her leadership is uncertain mainly because her subject knowledge is unsatisfactory. Although she monitors teaching, she is unaware of weaknesses within the subject. The policy for PE requires updating to make the most of links with other areas of the curriculum. Pupils and staff sometimes ignore the policy's health and safety advice about dangerous earrings. Assessment is unsatisfactory. Resources are good, but are rarely used effectively.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

142. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' attainment in RE was judged to be broadly average. Pupils made sound progress in their knowledge of Christianity and other faiths. However, the previous report noted that the school had no procedures in place to ensure that all aspects of the locally Agreed Syllabus were being adequately covered.

143. The picture of attainment is not as positive now. The limited time allocated to RE each week means that the content of the Bedfordshire agreed syllabus is addressed in only the sketchiest of terms, and lessons do not allow for an appropriate balance of instruction, consolidation and extension activities. Pupils develop isolated pockets of knowledge but these are not explored in sufficient depth for them to make effective connections between different aspects of their learning. They have too few opportunities to contribute their own ideas and experiences to RE lessons. As a result, progress is unsatisfactory across both year groups.

144. In Year 1, there is a reliance on a television programme to teach the curriculum but no time is allowed for elaboration and discussion with the pupils. In the scrutiny of work there is no recorded work by Year 1 pupils. In Year 2, some teachers use the time for RE profitably to give pupils some insight into different faiths. This is supported by good displays in some classrooms, for example about the Jewish Shabbas. Visits to local churches and to a mosque develop pupils' understanding of a variety of different religions although this is not consolidated through recorded work in pupils' books.

145. The teaching of RE is unsatisfactory. During the inspection, all Year 1 pupils and their teachers watched a video for twenty minutes at the end of the afternoon. There was no follow-up discussion or direct teaching by any of the teachers. In two lessons in Year 2, the teaching was satisfactory but time constraints limited opportunities for pupils to record their knowledge and understanding of Advent. In another lesson in Year 2, the class teacher talked about Advent without any reference to its religious significance. The last five minutes of a twenty-minute lesson were limited to drawing symbols of the commercial side of Christmas.

146. The school places a very high priority on pupils' social and moral development and links this to a highly effective programme on citizenship. This forms a basis for assemblies, is reinforced through circle time and is fundamental to the whole school ethos. The assembly themes are linked with the RE curriculum and with work on personal and social education. These links are very effective in developing moral tenets as the foundation of caring behaviour, but the distinction between assemblies and RE lessons is not sharp enough. The strong focus on moral issues is at the expense of exploration of the subject content which is allocated too little time. RE lessons help pupils to understand in life the importance of faith and belief, and pupils develop an awareness of the range of different faiths represented in the school. Celebrations of festivals in assemblies contribute well to pupils' cultural development. However, not enough emphasis is given to developing a firm knowledge and understanding of Christianity or other faiths.